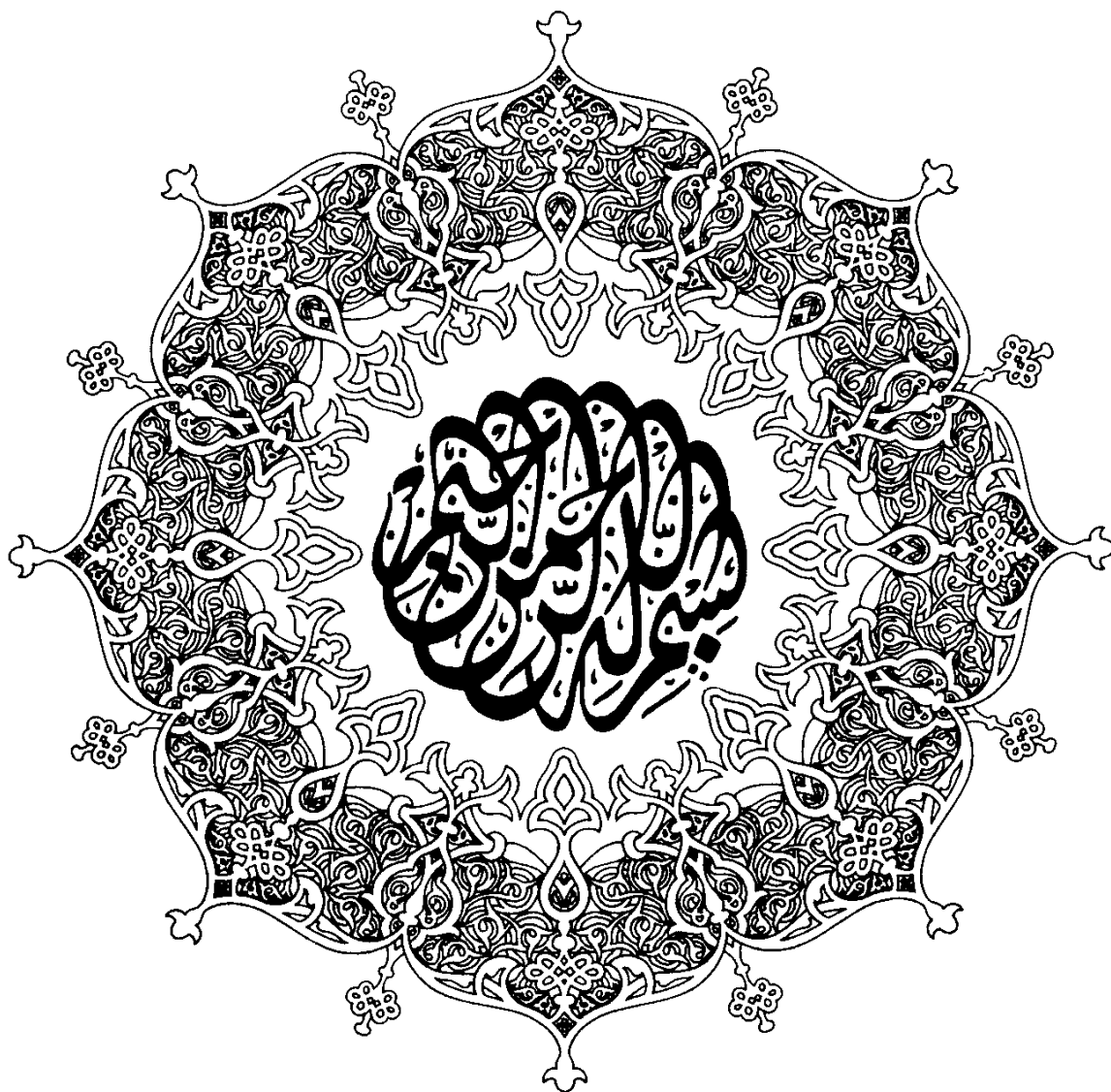


THE SUNNAH OF LOVE

By Sheikh Yahya Adel Ibrahim



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Ustadh Yahya Ibrahim

Ustadh Yahya Ibrahim is Canadian by birth & education, Egyptian through a rich ancestry, Turkish via the blessing of marriage to Songul and Australian by Choice of residence and migration.

Since his early teens, in the 90's, Ustadh Yahya has been talking about Islam to Muslims and non-Muslims. He was blessed with numerous opportunities to meet, translate, study and teach alongside some of the Islamic worlds top scholars. Ustadh Yahya is blessed now to be living in Perth, Western Australia with his wife and three wonderful children – Shireen, Omar and Adam. He is a regular lecturer to Muslim and non-Muslim audiences their and around the world. Recently, Ustadh Yahya was awarded by the West Australian State Government the "Individual Excellence in Community Service Award." Ustadh Yahya is a passionate educator with a decades experience in school leadership as an Asst. Principal & registered Teacher. He, also, serves the Muslim community at Curtin University and the University of Western Australia as the Islamic Chaplain and teaches Islamic Ethics & Theology, internationally, with al-Kauthar Institute www.alkauthar.org .

'Ali *radī Allāhu 'anhū* came home one day from a journey that he had been dispatched on by the Prophet Muhammed *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, to find his wife, Fatima, the daughter of



the Prophet, *radiya Allahu 'anha* brushing her teeth with a *siwak* – twig of an Arak (*Salvadora persica*) tree used for brushing teeth. Spontaneously, he, *radī Allāhu 'anhū*, spouted out poetic endearment:

هنئت يا عود الأراك بثغرها ... أما خشيت يا أراك أراك
لو كان غيرك يا سواك قتلته ... ما فاز منى يا سواك سواك

Fortunate are you O twig of the Arak tree,

Have you no fear of me observing you in this embrace

If it were other than you...O Siwak! I would have killed you!

None found this fortune of embrace before me, but you.

I get emailed & [facebooked](#) often from couples trying to salvage and mend broken trust and exponentially inhospitable relationships. I usually respond within a couple of weeks, detailing my unwillingness to “counsel” from a virtual distance that begets unilateralism. Horror stories of infidelity, violence, and arrogance abound. Naturally, there is

no greater issue facing the Muslim communities of the West that is more pressing and multidimensional than that of family relations.

The statistics are frightening, imams are untrained in effective counseling methods, mosques are under pressure, Islamically-oriented marital counselors are unheard of and professionalism in terms of confidentiality seem non-existent.

An important dimension of domestic marital problems, as I see, is that **the Sunnah of Love and Gallantry** seems to be overlooked or dismissed as a long-gone era. The Sunnah, that is taught at times, seems to overlook amazing instances of passion, valor, fidelity and sacrifice in the name of true love. Instances from the life of the Prophet *sala Allahu 'alibi wasSalaam* and his companions builds a comprehensive system of devotion – a Sunnah of Love.

Love. The real kind – the genuine love between a man and his wife that stems from a seed of love that is planted by Allah in the hearts of those who are true in submission to the Dispenser of Love and Comfort.

A seed, literally and figuratively, in Arabic symbolizes love. *Houb* in Arabic is derived from the same root for the word *Haab* – seed. The nature of the two words is



functionally similar.

Love begins as a tiny speck – a seed that is buried deep in the folds of a receptive heart, carrying the potential of stunning beauty, nourishing sustenance, exotic delicacy, wealth of commodity, shading shelter, and resurgent growth that is stabilized through deep roots that withstand trauma.

Amr ibn al-'As *radī Allāhu 'anhu* was appointed by the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to command an important mission. He was handpicked from many capable individuals who were in fact better than him. Feeling a sense of pride in being selected, he *radī Allāhu 'anhu* asks the Prophet, in front of a congregation of Sahabah about who he *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, loves? The Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* responds in the way that all of our wives would hope we would respond, by naming his wife, Aisha.

Consider that the Prophet would teach, *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, that if we love a friend, we need to let them know it. It was with this hope that 'Amr thought to ask that question after the favorable appointment was given to him.

Thinking that his question has been misunderstood he clarifies, saying that he meant from amongst the companions who did the

Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* love? The Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* responds, “Her Father.”

He does not respond, “Abu Bakr *radī Allāhu 'anhu*.” His response alludes to 'Aisha *radī Allāhu 'anha* as she was still on his mind and in his heart.



Love.

'Aisha *radī Allāhu 'anha*, al-Humayra – The Rosy Cheeked one, as the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* affectionately called her; *Umm al-Mu'mineen* – the Mother of the Faithful was loved and loved in return.

The Sunnah of Love is not whimsical or outrageously simplistic as you find depicted often in multibillion-dollar literary/theatrical sagas. No vampires competing with werewolves here. It is not ambivalent and shift. It is built on mutual acceptance of the decree of the Divine in search of comfort, repose and peace of mind. It flourishes, paradoxically, in the mundanity of life. Finding fleeting moments of intimacy between stacks of dishes, soiled diapers, mounds of work emails, grocery lists and infinite commitments are its hallmark. A look that you receive as you rush out the door, a quick phone call itemizing how the day is going or an SMS that contains a list of groceries to buy on the way home punctuated with an I love You, are all indicators.

'Aisha *radī Allāhu 'anha* and the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* would use code language with each other denoting their love. She asked the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* how he would describe his love for her. The Prophet Muhammad answered, saying: “Like a strong binding knot.” The more you tug, the stronger it gets, in other words.

Every so often 'Aisha would playfully ask, “How is the knot?” The Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* would answer, “As strong as the first day (you asked).”

So I begin to wonder, as should you, about what has happened to our community?

Why is it so hard to speak frankly of one's love for his wife? Why is it “soft” for a brother to praise his spouse?

How is it the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* can kiss his wife, as he exits to leave his home to lead the faithful in prayer and some in our community find it difficult to just smile?

How is it that the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* can stop a whole army, in times of hostility in a region of the desert that had no water to camp near, to look for his wife's misplaced bead necklace and some find it difficult to give a deserved compliment every now and again?

Since when is sternness considered leadership and harshness associated with married life?

How is it that the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* can mend his clothes and look after the domestic affairs of his household, and a brother can't put away a plate, let alone wash it unless the wife is sick?

How is it that the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* can forbid upon himself milk infused with honey so as to please his wives, who complained of its scent, culminating in Allah revealing a chapter in the Qur'an forbidding the Prophet from forbidding the lawful upon himself, “Because you seek to please your wives (66:1).” Yet, some in our community will not even give the rightfully due to their wife?

How is it that the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* teaches not to boycott a person for more than three days, and a brother can be out all day at work and feel apprehensive at the thought of returning home to a disgruntled partner who will give them the silent treatment over a petty squabble that has extended into weeks of dreary, isolating depression?

How is it that the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* forbids a person to lead another man in prayer in his home without permission, yet some

brothers due to constant bickering and negative criticism feel more like the help than the king of the castle?

Misreading the Sunnah, and not linking it to all matters of our life, including the mundane aspects is a justified criticism.

All of us learn through the course of our elementary studies of Islam that if you have no water, or if it is scarce, that you can perform *Tayamum* – ritual purification for prayer using sand or dust.

What you probably were not taught, and what was glossed over, was the fact that the permissibility and the legislation of that enormously important function were revealed because of the lost bead necklace.

You were not told that the love of the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* for 'Aisha resulted in him ordering a marching army to stop at a location without water and camp out at night with a dwindling



supply of water for their consumption. Her father, Abu Bakr *radī Allāhu 'anhu*, was furious with her for mentioning what, to him, seemed to be a trivial matter.

You were not told how the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* ordered the troops to look for a necklace in the sands of the Arabian Desert, all for the comfort of 'Aisha. You were, probably, not informed how

verses in the Qur'an descended upon the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* at such an occasion resulting in the joyous celebration of the Sahabah for the ease that Allah has provided for our *Ummah* as a result of this occurrence.

That is the Sunnah of Love. You look after the near, even if it may inconvenience the far.

You would have heard that the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* mended his own shoes at times. What you may not have heard was how once as he was sitting in a room with 'Aisha *radī Allāhu 'anha* fixing his shoes, 'Aisha happened to look to his blessed forehead and noticed that there were beads of sweat on it. Mesmerized by the majesty of that sight she remained transfixed staring at him long enough for him to notice.

The Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said, “What's the matter?” She replied, “If Abu Bukair Al-Huthali, the poet, saw you, he would know that his poem was written for you.” The Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* asked, “What did he say?” She replied,

“Abu Bukair said that if you looked to the majesty of the moon, it twinkles and lights up the world for everybody to see.”

So the Prophet *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* got up, walked to Aisha, kissed her between the eyes, and said,

“Wallahi ya Aisha, you are like that to me and more.”

That is the Sunnah of Love.

From the earliest days of Islam, 'Ali radiya Allahu 'anhu was a continuous witness of the life habits of Rasool-ul-Allah *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. He was a witness to Love.

'Ali, *radī Allāhu 'anhu*, arrived home to find the love of his life relaxing at home. No foreshadowing asserts anything special about the occasion or day. No fancy marketing to fleece customers of hard earned money. No gimmicks or convoluted infatuations promising a happily ever after proportional to carat size. It is just a man coming home after a long day at work. What he finds there is the greatest attainment any man could dream to possess, and hopefully retain – a wife whose presence fills him with joy.

The Prophet Muhammad, *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, said: “The world and all things in the world are precious but the most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman.”

Virtuous, not, exclusively, in terms of the length of prostration or in devotion to religious obligations but rather as he, *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, once informed 'Umar:

“Shall I not inform you about the best treasure a man can board? It is a virtuous wife who fills him with joy whenever he looks towards her.”

It is not love at first sight, rather exponential love with every glance.

Ya Allah, put love between our spouse and us and allow us comfort and mercy in our home.

Ya Allah, spread love and peace throughout the *Ummah* of Muhammed *ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*

O Allah grant us Your Divine Love

O Allah grant us the love of those who Love You

O Allah grant us the love of doing the things that earn Your Divine Love

Yahya Adel Ibrahim.